# Critter Safari

**Topic:** Biology/Animals

**Objectives:** Collect and investigate an invertebrate

**Grade Level:** all

**Time:** 10 – 15 minutes

**Materials:** digging trowels, magnifying lenses, small clear plastic collection containers, writing pads, pens or pencils

Vocabulary:
safari
invertebrate
impact
habitat
compound eye
antennae

**Location:** Front Lawn Grove, Saturn Playscape, Park Drive Grove

**Background:** Invertebrates such as millipedes, earthworms, ants and spiders are all forms of wildlife with the same basic needs as larger animals. In this activity you will locate and collect an invertebrate and investigate how it supplies its needs for food, water, shelter and space.

**Advance Preparation:** Before the students begin their search for an invertebrate, caution them not to harm the animal they find and collect. Tell the students that in this activity they are going to become scientists who carefully observe wildlife with as little impact on the animals as possible. After they complete their investigation, they will release the animals back into their habitats.

**Procedure:**

1. Choose a partner. With your partner collect from your teacher a digging trowel, a plastic collection container and a magnifying lens.

2. You and your partner are going on a scientific safari. Find a suitable location to search for an invertebrate that you can collect in your plastic container. Think of some likely places where you might find a specimen such as under some leaf litter, in the soil, under a rock, or on a twig.

3. After you have located an animal, gently transfer it to your collection container.

4. Carefully observe the animal you have collected. Use your magnifying lens. Note down your observations. After you complete your investigation, be sure to return your animal, unharmed, to the place where you found it.

**Questions to think about and discuss:**

1. How many legs does your study animal have, if any? Does it have wings? Notice the shape of the legs or wings. Notice how the legs or wings are attached to the body. How do you think it moves?

2. Look at the animal's head. How many eyes do you see? Does it have compound eyes? Do you see its mouth? What do you suppose your animal eats? How does it capture its food? How do you think your animal obtains the moisture it needs for survival?

3. Does your animal have antennae? If so, why do you think it needs the antennae?

4. Where did you find your animal? What do you suppose your animal uses for shelter? Does it make its home or use one that is provided by its environment?

5. How much space does your animal need? Does it share its home with other animals of the same species? Does it live near other animals of a different species?

6. How does your animal benefit from the way in which it lives? Think about how your animal's body structure and the environment in which it lives helps it obtain its basic needs of food, water, shelter and space.